By Edmand Waller, in the first Poem on Tea. y Edmand Waller, in the first Foem on Fez-venus her myrtle, Phoebus has his bays; Tea both excels, which she vonchsafes to praise The best of queens, and best of herbs, we owe To that bold nation which the way did show To the fair region where the sun does rise, Whose rich productions we so justly prize. The Muse's friend, tea, does our fancy aid, Repress those vapors which the head invade, And 'keeps that palace of the soul servine, Fit on her birthday to salute the Queen.

PIETRO GHISLERI.

BY F. MARION CRAWFORD. Copyright, 1892, by Macmillan & Co CHAPTER XVII.

Laura Arden's plans for the summer were not by any means settled, but she was anxious to leave Rome soon, both because travelling in the heat would be bad for little Herbert, and because she band's death. A far smaller and less pretentious dwelling would be amply sufficient for her next winter, and in the mean time she intended to go to some quiet town either in Switzerland or by the seaside, and to keep as much alone as possible. Her mother might be willing to spend a month or two first place, you are, at all events, not any worsewith her, and Laura would be very glad of her company, but there was no one else whose society desired. She could, of course, go to England and stay at her brother-in-law's house in solemn and solitary state, but she feared the long journey for her child, and she cared little for the sort of that clear?" existence she must lead in the magnificent countryseat, in the absence of the Lulworths themselves. It would be pleasant to lead a very simple and quiet life somewhere out of the world, and as far | yellow, instead of with white." possible from the scene of all her sufferings. If Adele and Francesco had not appeared while Ghisleri was making his first visit, she would probably have asked his advice. He had been almost everywhere, and being himself fond of solitude, would in all likelihood have told her of some beautiful and secluded spot where she could live before how, because you think all your motives in the way she desired. But in the presence of are insincere, or vain, or defective in some way. her stepsister she had not cared to speak on the

After they had left her she thought a long time her life, she wished she might see him again be fere long. He had shown her a side of himself which she had neither seen nor guessed at before, and she began to understand, dimly at first and had always shown for him. He was capable of deep and earnest beliefs and of high and generous impulses, in spite of his contempt for himself and of the irregular life he led. His present existence, as far as she knew anything of it, she condemned as unworthy. She was not, however, a woman as easily shocked at the spectacle of evil in the lives of others as might have been expected. There was a great deal of sound good sense in the composition of her character, and she had seen igh of the world to have learned that perfection is a word used to define what is a little better than the average. What she had disliked in Ghisleri from her first acquaintance with him was not connected with his reputation, of which, at that time, she had known very little. Besides, though people called him fast and wild and more or less heartless, he was liked, on the whole, as much as any unmarried man in society. He was plainly, when a woman had exerted a strong inknown to be honorable, courageous, and very dis creet, and the latter quality almost invariably a few bad ones had made up the sum of his life brings its reward in the end. That he should But she was dead and he had changed. Worse have been entangled in more than one love affair than that, he had fallen. As he sat in his room was only what was to be expected of such a man and glanced from time to time at the only likeness at two or three and thirty years of age, and no bne really considered him any the worse on that ount, while the great majority of women thought him vastly more interesting for that very reason. Laura was not, perhaps, so entirely dif-ferent from the rest of her sex as Ghisleri was fond of believing. Her education had not been that of young Roman girls, it is true, and the singular so shalt thou know that thou should'st have been ircumstances of her short married life had not developed her character in the same direction as theirs generally was by matrimony. But in real ess she was as much a woman as any of them, liable to the same influences and to the same class of enthusiasms. Because she had loved and married Herbert Arden, it did not follow that she should have had strength to drag thee down with it could not and did not admire all that was brave

her pity by his physical defects, had commanded her respect by the manly courage he showed under deformity in the superior gifts of intelligence and heart which had unquestionably been his, and, after all, she had loved him most because she had felt that but for an accident he would have been pre-eminently a manly man. Cripple as he was, she had always known that she could rely on him, and her instinct had always told her that he

But she had never trusted Ghisleri. He had the misfortune to show his worst side to most more than once that he was ready to undertake and carry out almost anything for his friend's sake, and she had been honestly grateful to him for all he had done. But she had not been able, until now, to shake off that feeling of distrust and timid dislike she had always felt in his presence. She had, indeed, succeeded tolerably well in hiding it from him, but it had always made her cold in conversation and somewhat formal in maner, and he, being outwardly a rather formal and old man, had, so to say, put himself in harmony ith her key. For the first time in their acquaintnoc, and under pressure of what he considered necessity, he had suddenly unbent, and had told her the principal story of his life with a frankness and simplicity that had charmed her. From that hour she judged him differently. After that first visit he went often to see her, and on each occasion he felt drawn more closely to her than before. "You are very much changed," he said to her

e day. "Do you mind my saying it?"
"Not in the least," Laura answered, with

smile. "But in what way am I different?" "In one great thing, I think You used to be very imposingly calm with me. You never seemed quite willing to speak freely about anything. Now it is almost always you who make me talk by making me feel that you will talk yourself. That is not very clearly put, is it? I do not know whether you ever disliked me-if you did you bever showed it. But I really begin to think that you almost like me. Is there any truth in that?" Yes-a great deal." She smiled again, "More Bruth than you guess-for I do not mind saying it since it is all over. I did not like you, and I

ed to try and hide it. But I like you now, and am quite willing that you should know it." "That is good of you-good as everything you

to is. But I would really like to know why you have changed your mind. May 1?"

Because I have found out that you are not what I took you for." Most discoveries of that kind are disappoint

pents," observed Ghisleri, with a dry laugh.

"That is just the sort of a remark I used to Rislike you for," said Laura. "The world is not all bad, and you know it. Yet out of ten obsertions you make, nine, at least, would lead one

Excepting yourself, we are all as bad as we What is the use of denying if?"

We are not all bad, and I do not choose made an exception of. I am just like other peonot only am sure that you are not a bad man, but I am quite convinced that in some ways you

are a very good one."
"What an odd mistake." "Why do you persistently try to make yourself but worse than you are, and to show your worst

to the world?"
I suppose that is the side most apparent to lf," answered Ghisleri. "I cannot help see-

Borgia was by far the more intelligent of the two. Say Thersites.

"I know nothing about Thersites." "Then say Judas. There seems to be very little difference of opinion as to that personage's moral

obliquity," Ghisleri laughed. "Very well," said Laura, gravely. "I suppo you have no doubt, then, that Judas would have acted as you did in your affair with Don Gianforte. He would, of course, have submitted to insult rather than break a promise, and would

"Will you please stop, Lady Herbert?" Ghisleri fixed his blue eyes on her.

"No, I will not," answered Laura with decision. "What I like about you is precisely what you try the most to hide, and I mean to see it and to make you see it, if possible. You would be much happier if you could. I suppose that if the majority of people could hear us talking now they would think our conversation utterly absurd. They would say that you were posing, in order to make wished to leave the rather expensive apartment in yourself interesting, and that I was enough atwhich she had continued to live after her hus-band's death. A far smaller and less pretentious not that the way the world would look at it?" "Probably," assented Ghisleri. "Perhaps I am really posing. I do not pretend to know."

"I am willing to believe that you are not, if you will let me, and I would much rather. In the than most men one knows. That is evident enough from your actions. Secondly-you see I am arguing the case like a lawyer-if you had not a high ideal of what you wish to be, you would not have such a poor opinion of what you are. Is

"If there were no right, there could not possibly be any wrong. But black would be black, even if you could only compare it with blue, green and

"I am not talking of chromolithographs," said Laura. "What I say is simple enough. If you did not wish to be good, and know what good means, and if you had not a certain amount of goodness in you, you would not think yourself so bad. And you are unhappy, as you have told me I suppose you wish to be happy, and if you do you must learn to find some satisfaction in having done your best. I have said precisely what I mean,

of Ghisleri and his story, and, for the first time in an ; you must not pretend to misunderstand me. "Think yourself good and you will be happy," observed Ghisleri. "That is the modern form of

"Of course it is, and the better reason you really then more clearly, the strong liking her husband have for thinking yourself good, the more real and lasting your happiness will be."

Ghisleri laughed to himself and at himself as he went away for being so much impressed as he was by what Laura said. But he could not deny that the impression had been made and remained for some time after he had left her. There was a healthy common-sense about her mind which was beginning to act upon the tortuous and often morbid complications of his own. She seemed to know the straight paths and the short cuts to simple goodness, and never to have guessed at the labyrinthine ways by which he seemed to himself to be always trying to escape from the bugbear sent to pursue him by the demon of self-mistrust He laughed at himself, for he realized how utterly impossible it would always be for him to think as she did, or to look upon the world as she saw it. There had been a time when he had thought more fluence over him, and when a few good things and a few bad ones had made up the sum of his life be had of Bianca Corleone, he thought of Beatrice's reproach to Dante in the thirty-first canto of the

And yet because thou'rt shamed of me in all Thy sin, and that in later days to come Thou mayst be brave, hearing the Siren's voice the seed of tears and hear me speak.

moved Nor art nor nature had the power to tempt thee with such delight as that fair body could In which I lived-which now is scattered earth-And if the highest joy was lost to thee

As he repeated the last words he started, for and generous and strong, independently of moral they reminded him with painful force of Gianforte odonico's insulting speech, and he detested mind-for allowing himself to repeat Beatrice's words up to that point. It was he who has dragged down Maddalena dell' Armi to his level, not she who had made him sink to hers. And yet Campodonico had said almost the same thing as Beatrice, and certainly without knowing it. In his heart he knew that Bianca might have reproached him so, but then, deeper still, he knew that the reproach, from her lips, would have fallen on himself alone, and would never have been meant

> the lives of others, in one of those black moods which sometimes seized him and in which he believed in no one's motives, from his own upward In the course of his lenely and bitter meditations. In the course of his lenely and bitter meditations, he came across an idea which at first seemed wild and improbable enough, but which, little by little, tools shape as he concentrated his attention upon it, and at last chased every other memory away. He was not naturally an over-suspicious man, but when his suspicions were once roused he was apt to go far in pursuit of the truth, if the matter interested him. He rose and got a book from the shelves which lined one side of the wall, and began to turn over the pages rapidly, until he stopped at the place he was looking for. He read three or four pages very carefully twice over and returned the volume to its place. Then he sat down to think, and did not move for another quarter of an hour. At the end of that time he called his servant—a quiet, hard-working fellow from the Abruzzi, who rejoiced in the name of Bonifazio.
>
> "De you henner to know," he asked "if there

Bonifazio.

"Do you happen to know," he asked, "if there was much scarlet fever in the city last winter? I have always wondered how poor Lord Herbert caught it."

Bonifazio had known Lord Herbert for years,

caught it."

Bonifazio had known Lord Herbert for years, just as Donald had known Ghisleri, for the two friends had often made short journeys together, taking their servants with them. The Italian thought a long time before he gave an answer.

"No, Signor. I do not remember hearing that there were many cases. But then, I am not in the way of knowing. It may have been."

"You are a very discreet man. Bonifazio," said Ghisleri. "Lord Herbert fell ill on the day after he had dined in Casa Savelli. Do you think you could find out for me whether any one of the servants had the scarlet fever at that time?"

"Perhaps, Signor. I will try. I know Guiseppe, the butler, who is a very good person, but who is not fond of talking. When there is such an illness they either send the servants to the hospital, in the Roman houses, or else they put them in an attic and try not to let any one know. For the rest, I will do what I can. You say well, Signor, for it is possible that the blessed soul of the Milord cought the fever at the dinner in Casa Savelli."

"That is what I think," said Ghisleri. And

friendship behind it. That was, indeed, the best that could be hoped for either of them, and he had no right to expect the best, nor anything approaching to it.

friendship behind it. That was, indeed, the best that could be hoped for either of them, and he had no right to expect the best, nor anything approaching to it.

One evening as he was dressing for dinner Bonifazio gave him the news he desired. It had not been easy to extract any communication on the subject from old Guisenne, the Savelli's butler, but such as he had at last given was clear, concise and to the point. There had been a case of searlet fever in the house. Donna Adele's mand had taken it, and was just convalescent at the time when the Ardens dined with Adele and her husband. The woman's name was Lucia, and on falling ill she had been at once removed to a distant room in the upper part of the polace. The case had been rather a severe one, Guiseppe believed, and it was only within the last few weeks that Lucia seemed to have regained her strength. She was at present at Gerano with her mistress, but had written to the wife of the Savelli's porter saving that she had been dismissed, and was to leave at the end of the month, and asking for assistance in finding a new place. Ghisleri was satisfied for the present. It was quite clear that Arden must have caught the fever that killed him so suddenly in Casa Savelli. Whether Donna Adele had in any way communicated the contagion was another matter, and not easily decaded. Her inexplicable nervousness, beginning about the time that Arden died, might be accounted for on the ground that she was aware of having been the unintentional cause of his illness, and felt that by a little precaution she might have averted the catastrophe. The idea was constantly present in Ghisleri's mind, but it lacked detail and clearness, and constituted at most a rather strong suspicion. Of course it was quite possible, and, considering Adele's character, more than likely, that she had never been near the maid during her illness. If she had never had the scalet fever herself, it was quite certain. But that was a point easily settled, and was a very important one.

On the following da

whether she intended to be with her daughter.

"I hope to be with her a great part of the time," she answered. "I do not like to think of her as travelling about the world alone. Indeed, I do not at all approve of her living without a companion, as she insists upon doing. She is far too young, and people are far too ready to talk about her."

her."

"She has such wonderful dignity," answered Ghisleri, "that she could do with impunity what most women could not do at all. Besides, her mourning protects her for the present, and her child. She is looking wonderfully well—do you not think so?"

"Yes. When one thinks of all she has suffered it is amazing. But she was always strong."

"I should suppose so Any one else would have caught the searlet fever."

"As for that "said the Princess, unsuspiciously.

caught the scarlet fever."

"As for that," said the Princess, unsuspiciously,
"people rarely have it twice."

"She has had it, then."

"Oh, yes. Both the girls had it at the same
time, when they were little things. Let me see—
Laura must have been six years old then. They
had it rather badly, and I remember being terribiy anylogs about them."

had it rather badly, and I remember being terribly anxious about them."

"I see," answered Ghisleri, carelessly. "That accounts for it. But to go back to what we were steaking of. I wonder that Lady Herbert does not spend the summer with you at Gerano, if you go there as usual."

"I do not think she will consent to that," said the Princess, rather coldly. "She says she prefers the north for the baby. It is quite true that it is often very hot at Gerano."

"Donna Adele was good enough to ask me to go out and spend a day or two while she is there. It must be very pleasant just now, in the spring weather."

"Why do you not go?" asked the Princess, with "Why do you not go?" asked the Princess, with more warmth, for she preferred that Ghisleri should be where he could not see Laura every day, as she believed he now did. "You would be doing them both a kindness. Poor Adele was obliged to go to the country against her will—she is in such a terribly nervous state. I really do not know what to make of it."

"What news have you of her?" inquired Ghisleri, in a tone of polite solicitude. "Is she at all better?"

She was better after the first few days. Then

understand how it was from what Francesco wrote to my husband—but it seems to have been one of those odd accidents—optical illusions, I suppose—which sometimes terrify people.

"How very unfortunate! What did she fancy she saw?"

"It was absurd, of course!" answered the Princess, who had no special reason for being reticent on the subject. "It seems that there was a blue cloak of hers hanging somewhere in her dressing room—at a window, I beheve—and she went in suddenly very early in the morning betare it was quite broad daylight, and took the cloak for a man. In fact she thought it was poor dear Arden. You know he always used to wear blue serge clothes. Francesco saw it himself afterward and says that it was a says that it wa

suite broad daylight, and took the cloak for a man. In fact she thought it was poor dear Arden. You know he always used to wear blue serge clothes. Francesco saw it himself afterward and says that it was extraordinarily like. But I cannot understand how anyone in their senses could be deceived in that way. Adele is dreadfully overwrought and imaginative. She has danced too much this winter, I suppose."

When Ghisleri went away he was almost quite persuaded that Adele was conscious of having communicated the fever to Arden. Of course, it might all be mere coincidence, but to him the evidence seemed strong. He wrote a note to Adele, asking whether he might avail himself of her invitation, and spend a day at Gerano. Her answer came by return of post, begging him to come at once, and to stay as long as possible. The handwriting was so illegible that he had some difficulty in reading it. To judge from that, at least. Adele was no better.

Before leaving Rome, he thought it best to inform Laura of his intended visit. He had never spoken of her stepsister in a way to make her suppose that he disliked her. But Laura knew very well what part he had played at the time when Adele was spreading slanderous reports, for her mother had repeated the story precisely as the Prince had told it to her. Ghisleri, of course, was not aware of this, for Arden had not mentioned the matter to him, unless his reference to the enemies he and Laura had in Rome, during the last conversation he had with his friend, could be taken as implying that Ghisleri knew as much as he himself. But in any case, he was sure that Laura would be surprised at his going to Gerano, even for a day, and it was better to warn her beforehand, and if possible give her some reasonable explanation of his conduct. He close to refer his visit at once to motives of curiosity, together with a natural desire to breathe the purer air of the country, now that he was able to make the short journey without fatigue or danger.

"I have never been to Gerano," he added. "It is s

and since Donna Adele is so good as to ask me, i shall go."

"You would see it better if you went when my mother and stepfather are there. He would show you everything and give you all sorts of historical details which Adele has forgotten and which Francesco never knew."

"No doubt, but there is one objection," answered Ghislerl, "They have never asked me. I am not a favorite with the Princess. I am sure you know that."

"She thinks you are very wild," said Laura,

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When Adele had read Padre Bonaventura's letter twice over and had realized its meaning, she behaved like a person stunned by an actual blow. She sank into the nearest chair, utterly overcome

behaved like a person stunned by an actual blow. She sank into the nearest chair, utterly overcome. She had barely the presence of mind to tear up the sheet of paper into minute shreds, which she gathered all in one hand, until she could find strength to scatter them out of the window. The position was a terrible one indeed, and for a long time she was unable to think connectedly about it, or of anything clse. But for the two nights of sound sleep she had got by taking the chloral she must inevitably have broken down. As it was, her strong constitution had asserted itself so soon as she had been able to rest, and she was better able to meet this new and real trouble than she had been to face the imaginary horror of Herbert Arden's presence in her dressing-room. But, even so, half an hour clapsed before she was able to rise from her seat. She tossed the scraps of paper out of the window and watched them as the wind classed them in all directions, upwind and downward, upon the castle wall. Then all at once she began to think, and her brain seemed to act with an accuracy and directness it had never had before. Either the letter had been opened in the house or at the postoffice. It could not have been opened it Rome, or at least the probabilities were enormously against such an hypothesis. It was seared more like that the man at the Gerano pestoffice should have ventured to tamper with a sealed envelope coming from the castle, and for which he had given a receipt before taking charge of it. He could not have the smallest interest in reading Donna Adele's correspondence, and he had everything to lose if he were caught. He would certainly not have supposed that she or her husband, having but lately left the city, were sending back a sum of money in notes large enough to make it worth his while to incur such a risk. In other words, the theft had been committed in the house, and no one but Lacia could have been the thief. Lucia had been summarily dismissed; Lucia was the only servant in the establishment who had seriou

switch the series of the size of the size of where sensing the make it worth his white to more send must be more than when a size of the s

roomful of the latter's friends.

Under the circumstances, she behaved with a courage and determination admirable in themselves. Few women could have borne the constant strain upon the faculties at all, still fewer after such illness as she had suffered. But she was really very strong, though everything which affected her feelings and thoughts reacted upon her physical nature as such things never can in less nervously organized constitutions. She bore the everneiating anxiety about the lost confession better than the shadowy lear of the supernatural which still haunted her in the hours of the night. On the third day she becomed her husband to increase the dose of chloral by a very small quantity, saving that if only she could sleep well for a whole week she would then be so much better as to be able to give it up altogether. Savelli hesitated and at last consented. Since she had seemed so much more quiet he dreaded a return of her former state, for he was a may who loved his case and hated everything which disturbed if.

The doctor had particularly enationed him to keep the chloral put away in a safe place, warning Francesco that the majority of persons who took it soon began to feel a craving for it is larger quantities, which must be checked to avoid the risk of considerable damage to the health in the event of its becoming a habit. It was after all only a palliative, he said, and could never be expected for work a cure on the nerves except as an indirect means to a good result. Francesco kept the bottle in his dressing-bag, which remained in his own room and was fitted with a patent lock. He yielded to Adele's request on the first occasion and she went with him as he took the glass back to strengthen the dose. "Why do you keep it locked up." she said. "Do you suppose." The doctor told me to be careful of it," he answered. "The servants might try a dose of it out of curiosity." He took what he considered necessary and locked the bag again, returning the key to his pocket.

Two or three days passed in this way

necessary and locked the bag again, returning the key to his pocket.

Two or three days passed in this way. Adele began to feel that she longed for the night and the southing influence of the chloral, as she had tormerly longed for oaylight to end the misery of the dark hours. The days were now made almost intelerable for her by the certainty that her maid knew her secret, and by the necessity for treating the woman with consideration. Yet she could do nothing, and she knew that she never could do nothing, to lessen her own anxiety as long as she lived. She was much alone, too, during the day. She walked or drove with her husband during two or three hours in the afternoon, but the rest of

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HABUTAI (White Figured),

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innancial side of farming better than Ghisleri, but the latter had a much more practical ac purintance with the capabilities of different sorts of land.

After they had returned to the castle, Francesco left Ghisleri with his wife in the drawing-room, and went off to his own quarters to talk with the steward of the estate. Ter was served, but Pietro noticed that Adele did not take any.

"I suppose you are afraid that it would keep you awake at nicht," he remarked. "How is your insomnia? Do you sleep at all?"

"I am getting quite well again," Adele answered. "You know I always told you that I needed something really strong to make me sleep. The doctor has given me chloral, and I never wake up before cight or nine o'clock. It is a wonderful medicine."

"Insomnia is one of the most unaccountable things," said Ghisleri, in a meditative tene. "I know a man in Constantinople who told me that at one time he never slept at all. For three months he iterally could not lose consciousness for a moment. I believe he suffered horribly. But then, he had something on his mind at the time which accounted for it to a certain extent."

"I suppose he had lost money or something of that kind," confectured Adele, stirring two lumps of sugar in a glass of water.

"No, it was much worse than that. He had ac-

"I suppose he had lost mency of sometime of that kind," conjectured Adele, stirring two lumps of sugar in a glass of water.

"No, it was much worse than that. He had accidentally killed his most intimate friend on a shooting excedition in the Belgrage forest."

Ghisleri heard the spoon rattle sharply against the glass, as Adele's hand shook, and he saw that she bent down her head quickly, pretending to watch the lumps of sugar as they slowly dissolved.
"How terrible!" she exclaimed, in a law voice.
"Yes," answered thirsleri, in the same insifferent tone. "But if you will believe it, he had the courage to refuse chlorad, or any sort of sleeping draught, though he often sat up reading all night. He had been told, you see, that the habit of such things was much more dangerous than insomnia itself, and he was ultimately cared by taking a great deal of exercise. He had an extraordinary force of will. I believe be has never felt any bad effect from what he endured. You know one can get used to anything. Look at the people who starve in public for forty days and do not die."
"We shall see Pietrasanta and his wife doing We shall see Pietrasanta and his wife doing

"We shall see Pietrasanta and his wife doing that for the next forty years," said Adele, with a tolerably matural laugh. "They ought to go into training as soon as possible if they mean to be happy. They say nothing spoils the temper like hunger. Were you ever near being starved to death on any of your travels, Ghisleri?"

"No; I never get further than being obliged to live on nothing but beans and bad water for nine days. That was quite far enough, though. I get thin, and I have never eaten beans since."

"I do not wonder. Fancy eating beans for nearly a fortnight. I should have died. And where was it? Were you imprisoned for a spy in South America? One never knows what may or may not have happened to you—you are such an unaccountable man!"

"That never happened to me. It was at sea. I took it into my head to go to Sardinia in a small vessel that was sailing from Amalii with a cargo

took it into my head to go to Satulina in a small vessel that was suiling from Amalfi with a cargo of beans to bring back Sardinian wine. We were becalmed, and got short of provisions, so that we fell back on the beans. They kept us alive, but I would rather not try it again.

"What endless adventures you have had! How

"What endless adventures you have had! How tame this society life of ours must seem to you after what you have been accustomed to! How can you endure it?"

"It is never very hard to put up with what one likes," answered Ghisleri, "nor even to endure what one dislikes for the sake of somebody to whom one is attached."

"If any one else said that it would sound like a platitude. But with you it is quite different. One feels that you mean all you say."

Adele was evidently determined to be complimentary, and even more than complimentary, today. She was never cold or at all unfriendly with Ghisleri, whom she liked and admired, and whom she always hoped to see altimately established as a permanent member of her own immediate circle, but he did not remember that she had ever triked exactly as she was talking now, and he attributed her manner to her nervousness. He laughed carelessly at her last remark.

"I am not used to such good treatment," he said, "though I never can understand why people take the trouble to doubt one's word. It is so much easier to believe everything—so much less trouble."

"I should not have thought that you were a very credulous person," answered Adele. "You

ery. He suddenly withdrew into himself as it were, and tried to look at the matter objectively, as an outsider.

"It is a most difficult question to answer," he said at last. "I have often heard it discassed. If you care for my own personal opinion I will give it to you. It seems to me that in such cases one should be guided by circumstances as they arise, but that one can follow very safely a sort of general rule. If the blackmailer, as I call the person in possession of the secret, has any positive proof, such as a written document, or any other object of the kind, without which he or she could not prove the accusation, and if the accusation is really of a serious mature, then I think it would be wiser to buy the thing, whatever it is, at any price, and destroy it at once. But if, as in most of such affairs, the secret is merely one of words which the blackmailers may speak or not at will, and at any time, I believe it is a mistake to bribe him or her, because the demand for hush money can be renewell indefinitely so long as the person concerned lives, or has any money left with which to pay."

Adele had listened with the greatest attention throughout, and the direct good sense of his answer disarmed any suspicion she might have entertained in regard to the remark which had led to her asking his advice. She reasoned naturally enough that if he knew anything of her position, and had come to Gerano to gather information, he would have suggested some course of action which would throw the advantage into his own hands. But she did not know the man. Moreover, in her extreme fear of discovery, she had for a moment been willing to admit that he might know far more than was in any way possible, if he knew anything at all; whereas in truth he was but making the most vague guesses at the actual facts. It was startling to realize how nearly she had taken him for an enemy, after inviting him as a friend, and in perfectly good faith, but as the thought of the masters. It was all very natural. She made up her mind that she

Ghisleri saw that he had produced a good effect and was well satisfied. He turned back to a former point in order to change the subject of the

former point in order to change the subject of the conversation.

"That old story of the Montevarchi has interested me," he soid. "I wish I knew it all. Without being at all of an historical genius, I am fond of all sorts of family histories. Lady Herbert was saying yesterday that there are many strange legends and stories connected with this old place and that your father knows them all. You must know a great deal about Gerano yourself, I should think."

"Ob, of course I do," answered Adele with

and that your father knows them all. Tou make know a great deal about Gerano yourself, I should think."

"Oh, of course I do," answered Adele with alacrity. "I will show you all over the castle to-morrow morning. It is an enormous building, and bigger than you would ever suppose from the outside I will show you where they used to cut of heads—it is delightful! The head fell through a hole in the floor into a heap of sawdust, they say. And then there is another place, where they threw criminals out of the window, with four seats in it, two for the executioners, one for the confessor and one in the middle for the condemned man. They did those things so coolly and systematically in those good old days. You shall see it all; there are the dungeons and the trap-doors through which people were made to tumble into them; there is every sort of appliance—belonging to family life in the Middle Ages."

"I shall be very glad to see it all if you will be my guide," said Ghisleri.

They continued to talk upon indifferent subjects. At dinner Pietro took much pains to be agreeable, and succeeded admirably, for he was well able to converse pleasantly when he chose. Though extremely tired, he sat up till nearly midnight talking politics with Savelli, as Adele had foreseen, and when he was at last shown to his distant room by Bonifazio, who had spent mest of his day in studying the topography of the castle, he was nearly exhausted.

(To be Continued.)